

## **Testimony Concerning S.B.445**

### **Jamila HadjSalem**

I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my support of S.B.445, an act concerning certain recommendations of the task force on the sale of cats and dogs from humane origins at Connecticut pet shops .

I am a registered voter in Stafford Springs.

I fully support the task force recommendations concerning S.B.445. However, I do not feel that the provisions herein are adequate. Even with stricter laws and more regulations, cats and dogs are not treated humanely. Puppy mills are notorious for myriad horrors, including:

- no veterinary care
- indoor temperature no higher than 45 degrees
- dogs must be provided with bedding *only if* it falls below 50 degrees
- no natural light must needs be provided
- confining dogs 24/7 with only 6 inches of space around her or him
- to provide dogs with wire floor only and no solid flooring
- to confine dogs in stacked cages
- to fail to provide exercise or socialization to the dogs
- to breed females in ever heat cycle

The AWA enforcement of violations is weak at best, there are not enough inspectors to handle all the breeders. Most times, even if a breeder is fined, there is no follow up to make sure the breeder has complied with the regulations.

I would like you to include provisions to strengthen the humane sourcing of cats and dogs for Connecticut's pet shops. These provisions are:

- Inclusion of a requirement that all new pet shops may not sell commercially bred dogs or cats.
- Phase out the sale of commercially bred dogs and cats in Connecticut's 16 pet shops that are still currently selling them.

This will NOT harm small businesses, as they claim, considering that one hundred

other pet shops in Connecticut do very well without selling commercially bred dogs and cats. They could offer training programs, sell pet supplies, etc. There is no need for these 16 pet shops to continue to source dogs and cats from inhumane breeders.

Families and individuals who are looking for a dog or cat have many, many options open to them, other than inhumanely sourced animals. Shelters, municipalities, reputable breeders, are all excellent suppliers.

Animals are as important as we are, to many they are the children they will never have. Animals are part of our families and communities. We care for them, and they need us. To turn our backs on them for profit and politics is unimaginable. We give the best possible care and highest standards to our children, so why not to our animals too? Do they deserve puppy mills and excruciating existences because they're a different species? The way we treat the helpless reflects on us, and these are among the most helpless.

I have known people who have purchased puppy mill dogs, years ago, without knowing what that entailed. They were in for a life time of veterinary visits due to the poor condition of the animals (directly related to the puppy mill treatment), and sadly, shorter lives for the dogs as a result.

I want to be a resident of the first state in the country to end the selling of puppy mill dogs and cats. Connecticut has an opportunity to finally set the right example, please do not let this pass by for the few who do not care about animal welfare.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify and I do hope you will strongly support this important piece of legislation.

Thank you,

Jamila HadjSalem  
Stafford Springs, CT